

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations  
and is not a part of the Official Record

## **BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES**

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

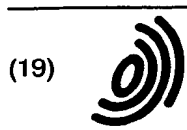
Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

**IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.**

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,  
please do not report the images to the  
Image Problem Mailbox.**

**THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)**



Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets



(11)

**EP 0 932 288 A1**

(12)

**EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

published in accordance with Art. 158(3) EPC

(43) Date of publication:  
28.07.1999 Bulletin 1999/30

(21) Application number: 97941246.7

(22) Date of filing: 26.09.1997

(51) Int. Cl.<sup>6</sup>: **H04M 1/02**, B29C 45/14

(86) International application number:  
PCT/JP97/03423

(87) International publication number:  
WO 98/13980 (02.04.1998 Gazette 1998/13)

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
FI FR GB NL SE

(30) Priority: 27.09.1996 JP 27700896

(71) Applicant:  
NISSHA PRINTING CO., LTD.  
Nakagyo-ku Kyoto-shi Kyoto 604-8873 (JP)

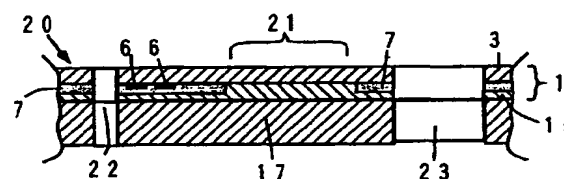
(72) Inventor: TOYOOKA, Naoto  
Nakagyo-ku Kyoto-shi Kyoto 604 (JP)

(74) Representative: HOFFMANN - EITL  
Patent- und Rechtsanwälte  
Arabellastrasse 4  
81925 München (DE)

(54) **UPPER CLOSURE OF A PORTABLE TELEPHONE AND METHOD OF PRODUCING THE UPPER CLOSURE OF THE PORTABLE TELEPHONE**

(57) A cellular phone top cover includes: a foil-decorating film (1) including an uppermost layer comprised of a transparent base film (3) and, laminated thereon, at least a character / symbol layer (6) for displaying characters or symbols and a colored layer (7) defining a transparent display window (21) of a cellular phone display, and a transparent adhesive layer (15) laminated thereon. The foil-decorating film is bonded via the adhesive layer (15) to a transparent resin molded article (17) of a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole (22) and push button through-holes (23), and at least the foil-decorating film (1) on the voice output through-hole (22) has been removed.

*Fig. 1*



**EP 0 932 288 A1**

## Description

### TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a cellular phone (portable telephone) top cover having a smaller number of components, high product strength, and high waterproofness, with an arbitrary design given to the top cover, and a method of manufacturing a cellular phone top cover which enables efficient production of a cellular phone top cover having a transparent display window and a character or symbol.

### BACKGROUND ART

[0002] Conventionally, a cellular phone top cover having a transparent display is constructed by a top cover body component molded of a colored molding resin having a hiding property to prevent any outward leakage of interior display light from an LED and the like, and a transparent display window component fitted in the body component which is molded of a transparent resin so as to allow an interior liquid crystal display to be made visible. The top cover body component has a trade name or the like printed thereon. The transparent display window component is edging-printed with a hiding black ink to provide a liquid crystal display contrast.

[0003] However, in prior art cellular phone top covers, the top cover body component and the transparent display component are primarily separate components; therefore, the cellular phone top cover may be easily disassembled and broken under impact, and is liable to entry of water through a crevice. As such, it had no sufficient product strength and no sufficient waterproofing capability.

[0004] A prior art method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover requires a number of steps which include molding the top cover body component, printing characters, symbols, and the like on the top cover body component, molding the transparent display component, edge-printing on the transparent display component, and fitting the top cover body component and the transparent display component together; as such, the method requires time so much for fabrication of the cellular phone top cover, and involves issues of frequent defective product occurrences and unsatisfactory production efficiency.

[0005] Also, the method requires a number of devices to be prepared including a molding device and a printing device, both for the top cover body component, a molding device and a printing device, both for the transparent display component, and further a device for fitting the top cover body component and the transparent display component together. This necessitates a large capital investment and production cost.

[0006] It is an object of the present invention to provide a cellular phone top cover which has a smaller number of components, satisfactory product strength,

and waterproofing characteristic, and has an arbitrary design given to it, and also to provide a method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover which enables efficient production of a cellular phone top cover having a transparent display window and a character or a symbol.

### DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

[0007] In order to accomplish above mentioned objects, the present invention is constructed as follows.

[0008] According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cellular phone (portable telephone) top cover comprising: a foil-decorating film including a character / symbol layer for displaying at least a character or a symbol and a colored layer defining a transparent display window of a cellular phone display which are laminated on an uppermost layer constructed by a transparent base film, and a transparent adhesive layer laminated thereon, the foil-decorating film being bonded via the adhesive layer to a transparent resin molded article of a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole and a push button through-hole, at least the foil-decorating film on the voice output through-hole having been removed.

[0009] According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cellular phone top cover comprising: a transfer layer including at least a character/ symbol layer for displaying a character or a symbol and a colored layer defining a transparent display window of a cellular phone display which are laminated on an uppermost layer constructed by a surface protection layer defined by a transparent ink, and a transparent adhesive layer laminated thereon, the transfer layer being bonded via the transparent adhesive layer to a transparent resin molded article of a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole and a push button through-hole, the transfer layer on the voice output through-hole and on the push button through-hole having been removed.

[0010] According to a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cellular phone top cover as set forth in the first or second aspect, wherein the colored layer is constructed by a black colored hiding portion, a first colored hiding portion, and a second colored hiding portion, and wherein the transparent display window is surrounded by any one of the hiding portions.

[0011] According to a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cellular phone top cover as set forth in any one of the first to third aspects, wherein the uppermost layer is resistant to sebum.

[0012] According to a fifth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cellular phone top cover as set forth in any one of the first and fourth aspects, wherein the uppermost layer has a matte surface.

[0013] According to a sixth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cellular phone top cover

as set forth in any one of the first to fifth aspects, wherein the uppermost layer has anti-bacterial characteristics.

**[0014]** According to a seventh aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover, which comprises:

bringing a foil-decorating film into intimate contact with an interior surface of a cavity recess of a mold capable of molding a transparent resin into a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole and a push button through-hole, the foil-decorating film including at least a character / symbol layer for displaying a character or a symbol and a colored layer defining a transparent display window of a cellular phone display which are laminated on a transparent base film, and a transparent adhesive layer laminated thereon; clamping the mold and then injecting the transparent resin, thereby enabling the foil-decorating film to adhere to a transparent resin molded article; and removing at least the foil-decorating film on the voice output through-hole.

**[0015]** According to an eighth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover, which comprises:

bringing a foil-decorating film into intimate contact with an interior surface of a cavity recess of a mold capable of molding a transparent resin into a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole and a push button through-hole, the foil-decorating film on which is formed a transfer layer including at least a surface protective layer formed of a transparent ink, a character and symbol layer for displaying a character or a symbol and a colored layer defining a transparent display window of a cellular phone display, and a transparent adhesive layer, which are sequentially laminated on a transparent base film; clamping the mold and then injecting the transparent resin, thereby enabling the foil-decorating film to adhere to a transparent resin molded article; then releasing the base film of the foil-decorating film and removing the transfer layer on the voice output through-hole and the push button through-hole.

**[0016]** According to a ninth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover as set forth in the seventh or eighth aspect, wherein a thickness of the colored layer of the foil-decorating film is 2  $\mu\text{m}$  - 10  $\mu\text{m}$ .

**[0017]** According to a tenth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cellular phone top cover fabricated in accordance with the method as set forth in any one of the seventh to ninth aspects.

**[0018]** According to the foregoing aspects of the present invention, the cellular phone top cover makes it possible to dispose a display, such as liquid crystal display, in the transparent display window, and a speaker or the like in the voice output through-hole, and to dispose a push button or the like made of a light permeable resin or the like in the push button through-hole; and in combination with a cellular phone back cover, the top cover makes it possible to provide a cellular phone. Such a cellular phone top cover involves a smaller number of components, has high product strength and high waterproofness, and has good design quality with an arbitrary design, such as character, symbol or pattern, given at an arbitrary spot(s).

**[0019]** The method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover of the foregoing aspects of the present invention involves no such fitting process as fitting many components together. Further, any arbitrary design of hiding pattern and the transparent display window can be formed into the resin molded article of an arbitrary configuration in one operation. Also, an arbitrary design can be easily given at an arbitrary spot(s) on the cellular phone top cover. Thus, it is possible to efficiently fabricate such a cellular phone top cover having the transparent display window and character or symbol or pattern as above mentioned.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

**[0020]** These and other aspects and features of the present invention will become clear from the following description taken in conjunction with the preferred embodiments thereof with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a partially sectional view showing a cellular phone top cover according to one embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a partially sectional view showing the cellular phone top cover according to the embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 3 is a sectional view showing a foil-decorating film for use in a method of manufacturing a cellular phone top cover according to one embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 4 is a sectional view showing a foil-decorating film for use in the method of manufacturing the cellular phone top cover according to the embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 5 is a sectional view showing the cellular phone top cover in accordance with the embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 6 is a sectional view showing one of the manufacturing processes in the method of manufacturing the cellular phone top cover according to the embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 7 is a sectional view showing one of the manufacturing processes in the method of manufacturing

the cellular phone top cover according to the embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 8 is a sectional view showing one of the manufacturing processes in the method of manufacturing the cellular phone top cover according to the embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 9 is a sectional view showing one of the manufacturing processes in the method of manufacturing the cellular phone top cover according to the embodiment of the invention; and

Figs. 10A and 10B are a front view and a side view showing the cellular phone top cover according to the embodiment of the invention.

#### BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

**[0021]** Before the description of the present invention proceeds, it is to be noted that like parts are designated by like reference numerals throughout the accompanying drawings.

**[0022]** The invention will now be described in detail with reference to the drawings.

**[0023]** Figs. 1, 2, 5, 10A, and 10B are views showing a cellular phone (portable telephone) top cover according to one embodiment of the invention.

**[0024]** The cellular phone top cover of the above mentioned embodiment of the invention comprises a foil-decorating film 1 including laminated on an uppermost layer constructed by a transparent base film 3, a character / symbol layer 6 for displaying at least characters or symbols and a light permeable or hiding colored layer, for example, a hiding layer 7 which defines a transparent display window, and a transparent adhesive layer 15 laminated thereon, the foil-decorating film bonded via the adhesive layer 15 to a transparent resin molded article 17 of a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole 22 and push button through-holes 23, at least the foil-decorating film 1 on the voice output through-hole 22 having been removed. Where the foil-decorating film 1 on the push button through-holes 23 is not removed, the foil-decorating film 1 on the push button through-holes 23 becomes a part of the uppermost layer for push buttons.

**[0025]** For the transparent base film 3, transparent plastic films, such as polyester resin, polypropylene resin, vinyl chloride resin, polyethylene resin, polyethylene terephthalate resin, polycarbonate resin, nylon resin, vinyl resin, acetate resin, polyethylene resin, polyamide resin, and polyacrylic resin, or polyvinyl chloride resin, are used as such. Usable as the transparent base film 3 are those in a thickness range of from 5  $\mu\text{m}$  to 300  $\mu\text{m}$ .

**[0026]** In case that the foil-decorating film 1 on the push button through-holes 23 is not removed, the thickness of the transparent base film 3 is 100  $\mu\text{m}$  to 300  $\mu\text{m}$ , preferably 125  $\mu\text{m}$ .

**[0027]** Since the transparent base film 3 will be brought into direct contact with human ear, hand, and

saliva, use of a sebum resistant material will result in endurance improvement. When the surface of a portion of the transparent base film 3 which will be brought into direct contact with human ear is matted by mat finishing, a soft feel to the ear can be obtained. For the transparent base film 3, use of a material having anti-bacterial characteristics can prevent infection by pathogenic fungi or the like and is desirable from a sanitary point of view. In this case, for the transparent base film 3 it is desirable to use a resin film which contains in a dispersed state or is coated with an anti-microbial or anti-bacterial agent containing the salt of any one of such metals as silver, copper, zinc, and manganese.

**[0028]** The character / symbol layer 6 may be formed by printing characters, numerics, graphics, symbols, or patterns, including trade name and maker's name, with inks comprised by pigments of such colors as white and black, and dyes, and a resin binder for presentation on the surface of a cellular phone, a beeper, or the like. The character / symbol layer 6 may also be formed by printing with black color inorganic pigments having hiding characteristics, such as carbon black and India ink, or metallic pigments, such as pearl pigments. The character / symbol layer 6 may also be constructed by a metal thin film formed by vacuum deposition, sputtering, ion plating, or the like method.

**[0029]** The hiding layer 7 is a layer for occluding the passage of light so as to prevent outward leakage of indicator light from an LED and the like which are mounted inside the cellular phone top cover 20, and defines a transparent display window 21. As other example of the hiding layer 7 than the one to be described hereinafter, the hiding layer 7 may be a light permeable colored layer formed of a light permeable ink, or a colored layer having a hiding characteristic which is formed of a hiding ink. The transparent display window 21 is a portion which is pervious to light so as to enable visual sight of indications from a liquid crystal display or the like mounted inside the cellular phone top cover 20. The transparent display window 21 corresponds to a no-hiding-layer portion on which no hiding layer 7 is laminated. It is possible to arrange so that the ink per se of the hiding layer 7 will appear in the form of character or symbol 16. It is also possible to arrange so that characters or symbols 16 are formed by a no-hiding-layer portion in which no hiding layer 7 is laminated. The hiding layer 7 may include a black color hiding layer 9 formed by printing with a black color hiding ink comprised by a black color inorganic pigment, such as carbon black or India ink, and a resin binder, or a white color hiding layer 12 formed by printing with a white color hiding ink comprised by a metallic pigment, such as pearl pigment, and a resin binder. The hiding layer 7 may be constructed by a metallic thin film formed by vacuum deposition, sputtering, or ion plating.

**[0030]** The hiding layer 7 may be constructed by a black color hiding portion 8, a first color hiding portion 10, and a second hiding portion 11, and the transparent

display window 21 may be defined by being surrounded by either hiding portion 10 or 11 (see Figs. 2 and 5). In many of conventional cellular phone top covers, portions other than the transparent display window are of single color design, say, hiding black color or hiding metallic color, so that the cellular phone top cover is monotonic in design and lacks attractiveness. As in the present embodiment, however, by so arranging that the cellular phone top cover has the hiding layer 7 segmentalized into three or more colors, for example, four or five colors, it is possible to enhance attractiveness in design. By arranging so that the first colored hiding portion 10 and second colored hiding portion 11 are of the same color it is possible to improve their hiding behavior.

**[0031]** A specific layer arrangement includes a first colored layer 13, a black hiding layer 9, a second colored layer 14, a white hiding layer 12, and a transparent adhesive layer 15, sequentially laminated one over another (see Fig. 2). That is, a transparent display window 21 surrounded by the black hiding portion 8 or the white hiding portion is defined by no-hiding-layer portion in which no black hiding layer 9 or no white hiding layer 12 is formed.

**[0032]** The black hiding portion 8 may be formed by patterning the black hiding ink of the black hiding layer 9. The first color hiding portion 10 may be formed by placing the white color hiding ink and the ink of the first colored layer 13 in superposed relation. The second color hiding portion 11 may be formed by placing the white color hiding ink and the ink of the second colored layer 14 in superposed relation. The ink of the first colored layer 13 and the ink of the second colored layer 14 produce colors different from each other. The ink of the first colored layer 13 and the ink of the second colored layer 14 may be light-permeable. A still further different black color hiding layer 18 may be formed on the white colored hiding layer 12. For the colors of the first colored layer 13 and the second colored layer 14, various colors may be used including black, white, blue, green, red, pink, and pastel colors.

**[0033]** Characters or symbols 16 may be formed by no-hiding-ink portions in which no black-colored hiding ink or no white colored hiding ink is formed. Or, characters or symbols 16 may be formed by ink portions in which a black-colored hiding ink or white-colored hiding ink is formed. The characters or symbols 16 formed by such no-hiding-ink portions may be colored by the light-permeable inks of the first colored layer 13 and of the second colored layer 14, or may be colored by a black-colored hiding ink or white-colored hiding ink. Thus, colored light-emitting characters or symbols 16, or white color hiding characters or symbols 16 are defined by being surrounded by the black or white color hiding portion. By arranging so that the boundary between the black colored hiding portion 8 and the first colored hiding portion 10 of the foil-decorating film, or the boundary between the black-colored hiding portion 8 and the second colored hiding portion 11 thereof, or the boundary

between the first colored hiding portion 10 and the second colored hiding portion 11 thereof is positioned in a recessed portion 26 of a transparent resin molded article 17, it is possible to obtain a product without any noticeable border line waviness, color deviation or the like which can enhance its appearance (Figs. 5 and 10A). The recessed portion 26 may be such that it is formed by a linear or annular groove (Fig. 10B). Or, the recessed portion 26 may be defined by a stepped portion.

**[0034]** The transparent adhesive layer 15 is a layer which will adhere to the surface of the transparent resin molded article 17, formed by cooling and then solidifying an injected transparent resin 39 to be described hereinafter. In case that the transparent adhesive layer 15 is caused to adhere to the surface of the transparent resin molded article 17 simultaneously with molding operation of the transparent resin molded article 17, a polyacrylic resin may be used for the transparent layer 15. In case that the transparent resin molded article 17 is formed with polyphenylene oxide / polystyrene resin, polycarbonate resin, styrene copolymer resin, or polystyrene blended resin, a resin having affinity for these resins, such as polyacrylic resin, polystyrene resin, or polyamide resin, may be used for the transparent adhesive layer 15. For forming the transparent adhesive layer 15, coating method such as gravure coating method, roll coating method, or comma coat method, or a printing method such as gravure printing method or screen printing method may be used. The dry film thickness of the transparent adhesive layer 15 is generally 1  $\mu$ m to 5  $\mu$ m.

**[0035]** The decorative layer may be laminated between the character / symbol layer 6 and the hiding layer 7. The decorative layer is a layer for providing the cellular phone with a pattern and colors. Various patterns exist including wood grain pattern, fake fur pattern such as leopard fur pattern, or abstract pattern such as marble tone.

**[0036]** The transparent resin molded article 17 has a cellular phone top cover configuration with the voice output through-hole 22 and the push-button through-holes 23. The transparent resin molded article 17 is such that the injected transparent resin 39 to be described hereinafter is cooled, solidified, and molded into shape. It is desirable that the voice output through-hole 22 is positioned in an upper portion of the transparent resin molded article 17 since the voice output through-hole 22 is to be brought close to or into contact with the user's ear. The push-button through-hole 23 is desirably located in a lower half portion of the transparent resin molded article 17 so as to enable the user to button-push with the thumb as he or she holds the phone in hand. A voice input through-hole 24 may be formed beneath the push-button through-hole 23. The reason for this is that the voice input through-hole 24 is a portion which is to be brought closer to the mouth of the user. On the surface of the transparent resin molded

article 17 at a location adjacent the position for the voice input through-hole 24 and at a location adjacent the position for the voice output through-hole 22, there may be a raised portion(s) relative to the position for the push-button through-hole 23. The transparent resin molded article 17 may have a side through-hole 25 for a switch, a dial, and a tuner at a rising portion or at a side portion (Fig. 10A).

**[0037]** The adhesion of the foil-decorating film 1 to the transparent resin molded article 17 may mean the state of adhesion effected with an adhesive via the transparent adhesive layer 15. Or, the adhesion may mean that when the transparent resin 39 to be converted into the transparent resin molded article 17 is in a molten state, the transparent adhesive layer 15 of the foil-decorating film 1 is brought into contact with the transparent resin 39 in the molten state, and is cooled and solidified while being kept in such contact, and that simultaneously the transparent resin layer of the foil-decorating film 1 is inseparably fixed to the transparent resin molded article 17 through sticking or fusion bond.

**[0038]** The cellular phone top cover of the present embodiment may be such that the foil-decorating film 1 is caused to adhere to the transparent resin molded article 17 so that the transparent base film 3 does not peel off, or may be such that the foil-decorating film 1 with a so-called transfer layer 2 formed is caused to adhere to the transparent resin component 17, and such that the base film 4 is made to peel off, with the transfer layer 2 alone kept in adhesion to the transparent resin molded article 17 (Fig. 5).

**[0039]** In the former case, the transparent base film is relatively thick as compared with the transfer layer and has a comparatively high rigidity. Therefore, on the push-button through-hole 23 the transparent base film 23 can be caused to function as a finger contact sheet which is a component of a membrane switch. Also, it is possible to form a continuous pattern on the push-button surface and the surface of the cellular phone top cover in such a way that the pattern of the top cover will not be interrupted at the location of the push-button through-holes 23.

**[0040]** In the latter case, the arrangement is such that on an uppermost layer constructed by the surface protective layer 5 defined by a transparent ink there are laminated at least a character / symbol layer 6 and the hiding layer 7 defining the transparent display window 21 and the transparent adhesive layer 15 laminated thereon to form a transfer layer 2, the transfer layer 2 being bonded via the transparent adhesive layer 15 to the transparent resin molded article 17 of the cellular phone top cover shape having the voice output through-hole 22 and the push button through-holes 23, at least the transfer layer 2 on the voice output through-hole 22 and on the push-button through-holes 23 having been removed (Fig. 2). The transfer layer 2 may have a decorative layer.

**[0041]** The surface protective layer 5 is formed of a

transparent ink. The surface protective layer 5 is intended to be peeled off between the base film 4 and the transfer layer after the transparent adhesive layer 15 is caused to adhere to the transparent resin molded article 17. The surface protective layer 5 may be formed by printing or the like means using a thermoplastic resin, natural rubber, a synthetic rubber, or the like. Materials usable for the surface protective layer 5 are polyacrylic resins. In case that hardness is required with respect to the surface protective layer 5, an ionizing radiation setting resin such as ultraviolet setting resin may be used. The ionizing radiation setting resin may be used singly or in mixture with other resins. Since the surface protective layer 5 will be brought into direct contact with human ear, hand, and saliva, use of a sebum resistant material for the surface protect layer 5 will result in endurance improvement. When the surface of a portion of the surface protective layer 5 which will be brought into direct contact with human ear is matted by mat finishing, a soft feel to the ear can be obtained. For the surface protective layer 5, use of a material having antibacterial characteristics can prevent infection by pathogenic bacteria fungi or the like and is desirable from a sanitary point of view. In this case, it is desirable that the surface protective layer 5 is formed by coating or printing using a synthetic resin ink which contains in a dispersed state an anti-microbial or antibacterial agent containing the salt of any one of such metals as silver, copper, zinc, and manganese.

**[0042]** Next, a method of fabricating the cellular phone top cover according to one embodiment of the invention will be described (Figs. 6 to 11).

**[0043]** The method of fabricating the cellular phone top cover in the present embodiment comprises: bringing the foil-decorating film 1 into intimate contact with the surface of the cavity recess 32 of a mold capable of forming a transparent resin molded article into the cellular phone top cover shape having the voice output through-hole 22 and the push button through-holes 23, the foil-decorating film 1 including laminated on the transparent base film 4, at least the character / symbol layer 6 and the hiding layer 7 defining the transparent display window 21, and the transparent adhesive layer 15 laminated thereon; clamping the mold and then injecting the molten transparent resin 39 thereinto, thereby enabling the foil-decorating film 1 to adhere to the transparent resin molded article 17; and removing at least the foil-decorating film 1 on the voice output through-hole 22.

**[0044]** The method of fabricating the cellular phone top cover is described in detail below.

**[0045]** First, the foil-decorating film 1, the injection mold, and an injection device are prepared.

**[0046]** The foil-decorating film 1 comprises at least the character / symbol layer 6 and the hiding layer 7 defining the transparent display window 21 both of which are laminated on the transparent base film 3, and laminated further thereon the transparent adhesive layer 15



(Fig.3). The foil-decorating film 1 may be such that on the base film 4 there are formed at least the surface protective layer 5 defined by a transparent ink, the character / symbol layer 6, the hiding layer 7 defining the transparent display window 21, and the transparent adhesive layer 15 sequentially laminated to form the transfer layer 2 (Fig. 4).

[0047] Materials of the transparent base film 3, the base film 4, the character / symbol layer 6, the hiding layer 7, the transparent adhesive layer 15 and/or the decorative layer are same as those of the cellular phone top cover of the embodiment already described. The thickness of the hiding layer 7 of the foil-decorating film 1 may be 2  $\mu\text{m}$  to 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in order to avoid cracking or crazing which may otherwise occur when the foil-decorating film 1 is substantially extended.

[0048] The hiding layer 7 of the foil-decorating film 1 is constructed by the black color hiding portion 8, the first color hiding portion 10, and the second color hiding portion 11, and the transparent display window 21 may be formed by being surrounded by one of the hiding portions.

[0049] A specific layer arrangement includes the surface protective layer 5, the character / symbol layer 6, the first colored layer 13, the black hiding layer 9, the second colored layer 14, the white hiding layer 12, and the transparent adhesive layer 15 which are sequentially laminated on the base film 4 (Fig. 4). That is, the transparent display window 21 surrounded by the black hiding portion 8 and the white hiding portion 12 is defined by no-hiding-layer portion in which no black hiding layer 9 or no white hiding layer 12 is formed. Materials for the base film 4, the surface protective layer 5, the character / symbol layer 6, and the transparent adhesive layer 15 are same as those of the cellular phone top cover of the embodiment described above.

[0050] The black hiding portion 8 may be formed by patterning the black hiding ink of the black hiding layer 9. The first color hiding portion 10 may be formed by placing the white hiding ink and the ink of the first colored layer 13 in superposed relation. The second color hiding portion 11 may be formed by placing the white color hiding ink and the ink of the second colored layer 14 in superposed relation. The ink of the first colored layer 13 and the ink of the second colored layer 14 produce colors different from each other. The ink of the first colored layer 13 and the ink of the second colored layer 14 may be light-permeable. Characters or symbols 16 may be formed by no-hiding-ink portions in which no black-colored hiding ink or no white colored hiding ink is formed. Or, characters or symbols 16 may be formed by ink portions in which a black-colored hiding ink or white-colored hiding ink is formed. The characters or symbols 16 formed by such no-hiding-ink portions may be colored by the light-permeable inks of the first colored layer 13 and of the second colored layer 14, or may be colored by a black-colored hiding ink or white-colored hiding ink. Thus, colored light-emitting

characters or symbols 16, or white color hiding characters or symbols 16 are defined by being surrounded by the black or white color hiding portion.

[0051] The mold is one such that the mold can form a transparent resin into the cellular phone top cover shape having the voice output through-hole 22 and the push-button through-holes 23 (Figs. 6 to 9). The mold is constructed by a movable mold 30 and a stationary mold 31. The movable mold 30 has the cavity recess 32 into which the transparent resin 39 is injected, and the stationary mold 31 has an injection port 33 positioned in opposed relation to the cavity recess 32 and connected directly to an injection nozzle of the injection device. The movable mold 30 may have slide cores 34 for forming the voice output through-hole 22 and the push-button through-holes 23 in the molded article. The slide core 34 may be rod-shaped, or annular or cylindrical. The movable mold 30 may have a convex portion 40 for forming the recessed portion 26 in the molded article. The movable mold 30 may, on a parting plane, have a clamp member 35 for pressing the foil-decorating film 1 around the peripheral edge of the cavity recess 32. The cavity recess 32 of the movable mold 30 may be formed with suction holes 36 for causing the foil-decorating film 1 to go into close contact with the interior surface of the cavity recess 32.

[0052] The mold may be provided with a feeder of foil-decorating film 1 for feeding the foil-decorating film 1 to the front of the cavity recess 32. The foil-decorating film feeder may be provided on either the movable mold-30-side or the stationary mold-31-side. The foil-decorating film feeder is constructed by a feed device 37 and a take-up device 38. The feed device 37 may be mounted above the movable mold 30 or below the stationary mold 31. The take-up device 38 may be mounted below the movable mold 30 or below the stationary mold 31. Also, the foil-decorating film feeder may be constructed by the feeder device 37 and a film introduction means so that a cut end of the foil-decorating film 1 is grasped and pulled into a space between the movable mold 30 and the stationary mold 31.

[0053] First, the foil-decorating film 1 is brought into intimate contact with the interior surface of the cavity recess 32 of a mold capable of forming the transparent resin molded article 17 having the voice output through-hole 22 and the push-button through-holes 23 into the cellular phone top cover shape (Figs. 6, 7, and 8).

[0054] Specifically, the foil-decorating film 1 is fed into a space between the movable mold 30 and the stationary mold 31 by the foil-decorating film feeder or the like. Next, the characters or symbols 16 of the foil-decorating film 1 are registered with the cavity recess 32. The boundary between the black color hiding portion 8 of the foil-decorating film 1 and the first color hiding portion 10, and other color boundaries may be registered with the convex portion 40 of the mold (Fig. 6). Next, the foil-decorating film 1 is sucked through the suction holes 36 of the movable mold 30 and brought into close contact with

the interior surface of the cavity recess 32 (Fig. 7). At this point of time, the foil-decorating film 1 may be heated for softening the foil-decorating film 1 to facilitate the extending of the foil-decorating film 1. In case that the cavity recess 32 has a high-rise defining depth, the hiding layer 7 of the foil-decorating film 1 is made relatively thick, say,  $2\ \mu\text{m}$  -  $10\ \mu\text{m}$ ; this is effective because the hiding effect will not be reduced even if the thickness of the hiding layer 7 is reduced as a result of the extending of the foil-decorating film 1. After the foil-decorating film 1 is brought into intimate contact with the inner surface of the cavity recess 32, the slide core 34 of the movable mold 30 may be projected from the cavity recess 32 toward the stationary mold 31 breaking through the foil-decorating film 1 and until the slide core 34 reaches the surface of the stationary mold 31. The projection of the slide core 34 may be carried out before mold clamping or after mold clamping (Fig. 8). Or, the slide core may be projected to a midway point and, after resin filling, may be caused to reach the surface of the stationary mold 31. Or, a slide core (not shown) is provided on the stationary-mold side in corresponding relation to the slide core 34 of the movable mold 30 and, after injection, the two slides are driven forward and backward to cut the foil-decorating film. Feeding may be carried out by feeding a foil-decorating film 1 cut to a specified length into the mold through trimming. Or, a long length of foil-decorating film 1 may be fed into the mold and, during mold closing or clamping, may be cut to a specified configuration.

[0055] Next, the mold is closed and the foil-decorating film 1 is caused to adhere to the transparent resin molded article 17 by injecting the molten transparent resin 39 (Fig. 9). After the molten transparent resin 39 is cooled and solidified, the base film 4 is peeled off where necessary. The foil-decorating film 1 or the transfer layer 2 on the voice output through-hole 22 is also removed.

[0056] Specifically, the movable mold 30 and the stationary mold 31 are clamped and the molten transparent resin 39 is injected through the injection port 33 of the stationary mold 31 into the cavity recess 32 so that the cavity recess 32 is filled with the molten transparent resin 39. The molten transparent resin 39 will not go around the projecting portion of the slide core 34 and, therefore, when the injected molten transparent resin 39 is cooled and solidified, the transparent resin molded article 17 is formed with the voice output through-hole 22 and the push-button through-holes 23 (Figs. 5, and 10B). In case that the boundary between the black color hiding portion 8 and the first colored hiding portion 10 of the foil-decorating film 1 and other color boundaries have been registered with the slide cores 34 and the projection 40 of the mold, the boundary between the black color hiding portion 8 and the first colored hiding portion 10 of the foil-decorating film 1, or other color boundaries are positioned in the recessed portions 26 of the transparent resin molded article 17; this is effective in that waving of color boundaries and color devia-

tions become unnoticeable (Figs. 5, 10A, and 10B).

[0057] For the transparent resin 39, injection molding resins, such as acrylic resin, polycarbonate resin, transparent ABS resin, or rubber-contained acrylic resin, are used. A specific example of the rubber-contained acrylic resin is "Acrylpet IR-D50", made by Mitsubishi Rayon K. K.).

[0058] In case that the base film 4 is not peeled off, removal of the foil-decorating film 1 is carried out in such a way that at least the foil-decorating film 1 on the voice output through-hole 22 is removed and, when necessary, the foil-decorating film 1 on the push-button through-holes 23 is also removed. The removed foil-decorating film 1 may be removed from the mold by means of a take-out robot or the like. After the product is removed, the foil-decorating film 1 may be removed. Where the base film 4 is peeled off and the transfer layer 2 is transferred, the foil-decorating film 1 on the voice output through-hole 22 is removed and, when necessary, the transfer layer 2 on the voice output through-hole 22 and on the push-button through-holes 23 is removed.

[0059] For removal of unnecessary portions, various methods are usable including air blow method, brush scraping method, or suction removal. Or, an adhesive-coated flexible sheet of PET or the like is placed on the voice output through-hole 22 and the push-button through-holes 23 on which unnecessary foil-decorating film 1 or transfer layer 2 remains unremoved, and a rubber or the like resilient material of convex configurations which can fit into the voice output through-hole 22 and the push-button through-holes 23 is pressed against the sheet from above, whereby unnecessary portions of the foil-decorating film 1 and the transfer layer 2 can be removed through the adhesive force of the flexible sheet.

[0060] The configuration of the transparent resin molded article 17 thus obtained can be varied in many ways by changing the configuration of the mold in various ways and, therefore, the configuration of the cellular phone top cover is not limited to the one described above.

[0061] The cellular phone top cover 20 fabricated as above described is fitted with a liquid crystal display in the transparent display window 21, and a speaker or the like in the voice output through-hole 22, and push buttons or the like made of a light-permeable resin or the like in the push-button through-holes 23; and in combination with a cellular phone back cover, the top cover makes it possible to provide a cellular phone.

[0062] The cellular phone top cover of the above described embodiments involves a smaller number of components, has high product strength and high waterproofness, and may have good design quality with an arbitrary design, such as character, symbol or pattern, given at an arbitrary spot.

[0063] The method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover of the foregoing embodiment involves no such fit-

ting process as fitting many components together. Further, any arbitrary design of the hiding pattern and the transparent display window can be formed into the resin molded article of an arbitrary configuration in one operation. Thus, an arbitrary design can be easily given at an arbitrary spot on the cellular phone top cover. Also, it is possible to efficiently fabricate such a cellular phone top cover having a transparent display window and a character(s) or a symbol(s) or a pattern(s).

[0064] The entire disclosure of Japanese Patent Application No. 8-277008 filed on September 27, 1996, including specification, claims, drawings, and summary are incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0065] Although the present invention has been fully described in connection with the preferred embodiments thereof with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be noted that various changes and modifications are apparent to those skilled in the art. Such changes and modifications are to be understood as included within the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims unless they depart therefrom.

#### Claims

1. A cellular phone top cover comprising: a foil-decorating film (1) including at least a character / symbol layer (6) for displaying a character or a symbol and a colored layer (7) defining a transparent display window (21) of a cellular phone display which are laminated on an uppermost layer constructed by a transparent base film (3), and a transparent adhesive layer (15) laminated thereon, the foil-decorating film being bonded via the adhesive layer to a transparent resin molded article of a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole (22) and a push button through-hole (23), at least the foil-decorating film on the voice output through-hole having been removed.
2. A cellular phone top cover comprising: a transfer layer (2) including at least a character / symbol layer (6) for displaying a character or a symbol, and a colored layer (7) defining a transparent display window (21) of a cellular phone display which are laminated on an uppermost layer constructed by a surface protection layer (5) defined by a transparent ink, and a transparent adhesive layer (15) thereon, the transfer layer being bonded via the transparent adhesive layer to a transparent resin molded article of a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole (22) and a push button through-hole (23), the transfer layer on the voice output through-hole and on the push button through-hole having been removed.
3. A cellular phone top cover as set forth in claim 1 or 2, wherein the colored layer (7) constructed by a black colored hiding portion (9), a first colored hiding portion (10), and a second colored hiding portion (11), and wherein the transparent display window is surrounded by any one of the hiding portions.
4. A cellular phone top cover as set forth in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the uppermost layer is resistant to sebum.
5. A cellular phone top cover as set forth in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the uppermost layer has a matted surface.
6. A cellular phone top cover as set forth in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the uppermost layer has antibacterial characteristics.
7. A method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover, which comprises:
  - bringing a foil-decorating film (1) into intimate contact with an interior surface of a cavity recess (32) of a mold capable of molding a transparent resin into a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole (22) and a push button through-hole (23), the foil-decorating film including at least a character / symbol layer (6) for displaying a character or a symbol and a colored layer (7) defining a transparent display window (21) of a cellular phone display which are laminated on a transparent base film (3), and a transparent adhesive layer (15) laminated thereon;
  - clamping the mold and then injecting the transparent resin, thereby enabling the foil-decorating film to adhere to a transparent resin molded article; and
  - removing at least the foil-decorating film on the voice output through-hole.
8. A method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover, which comprises:
  - bringing a foil-decorating film (1) into intimate contact with an interior surface of a cavity recess (32) of a mold (30, 31) capable of molding a transparent resin into a cellular phone top cover shape having a voice output through-hole (22) and a push button through-hole (23), the foil-decorating film constructed by a transfer layer (2) including at least, a surface protection layer (5) defined by a transparent ink, a character / symbol layer (6) for displaying a character or a symbol, a colored layer (7) defining a transparent display window (21) of a cellular phone display, and a transparent adhesive layer (15), which are sequentially laminated on

a base film (3);

clamping the mold and then injecting the transparent resin, thereby enabling the foil-decorating film to adhere to a transparent resin molded article;

then releasing the base film of the foil-decorating film and removing the transfer layer on the voice output through-hole and the push button through-hole.

5

10

9. A method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover as set forth in claim 7 or 8, wherein a thickness of the colored layer (7) of the foil-decorating film (1) is 2  $\mu\text{m}$  - 10  $\mu\text{m}$ .

15

10. A cellular phone top cover fabricated in accordance with the method of fabricating a cellular phone top cover as set forth in any one of claims 7 to 9.

20

25

30

35

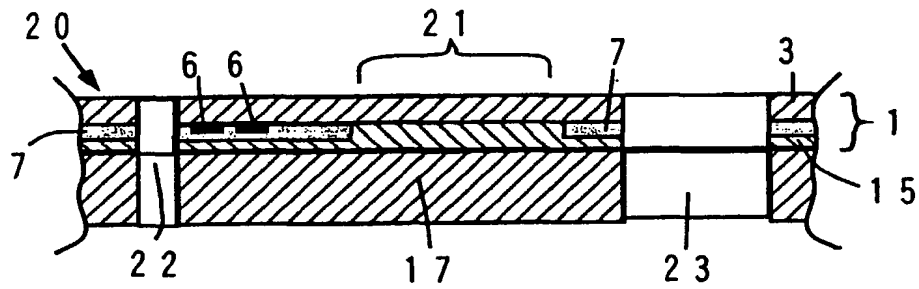
40

45

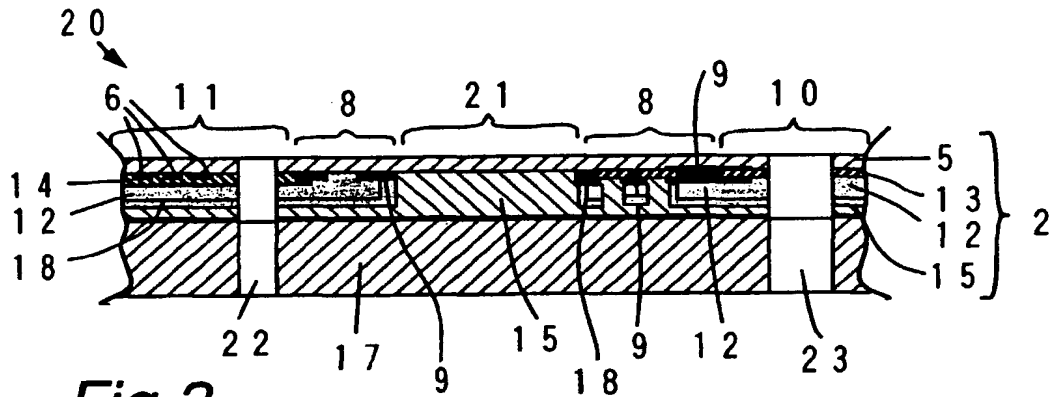
50

55

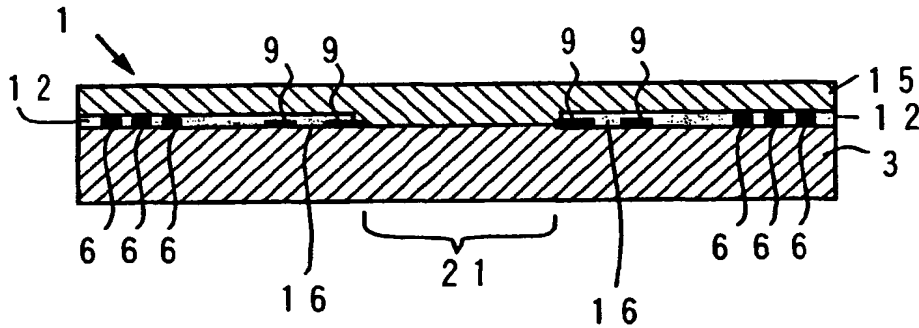
**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**



**Fig. 3**



**Fig. 4**

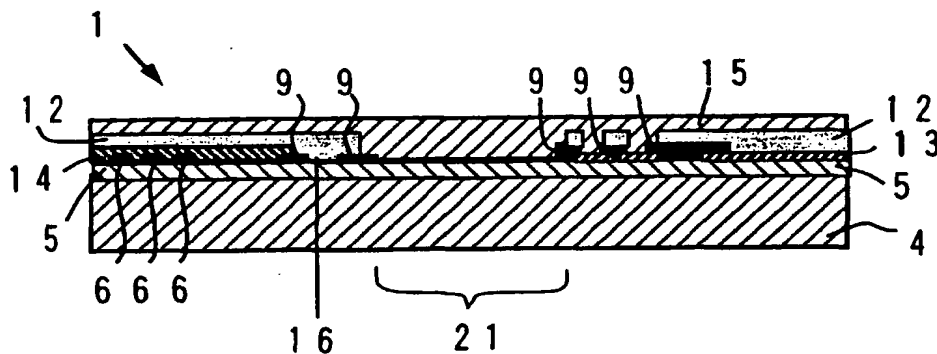
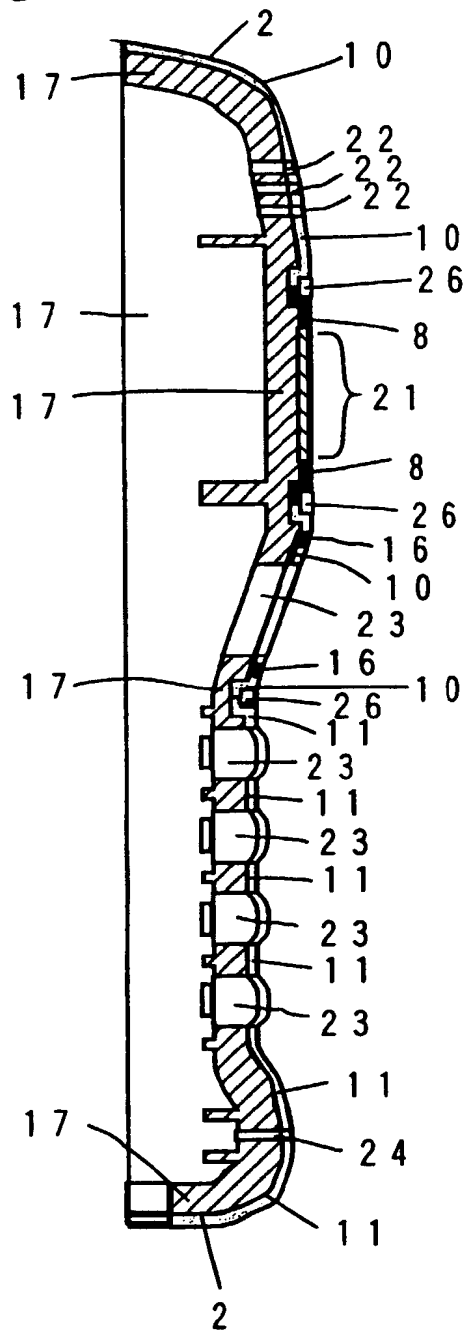
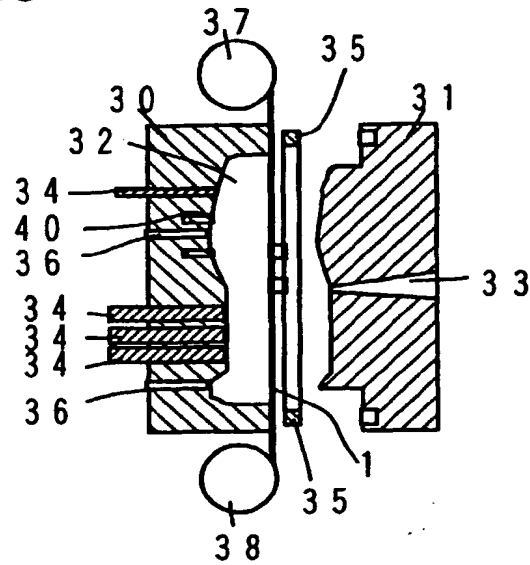


Fig.5



*Fig.6*



*Fig.7*

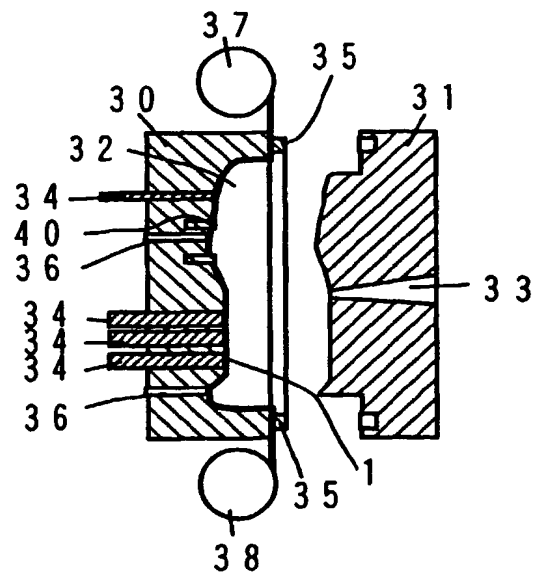


Fig.8

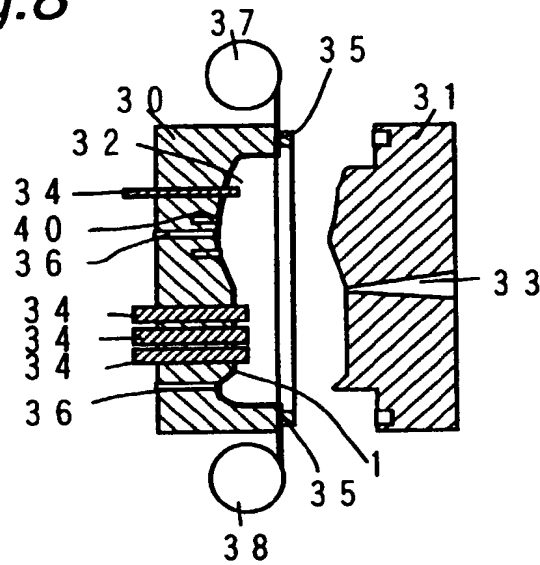


Fig.9

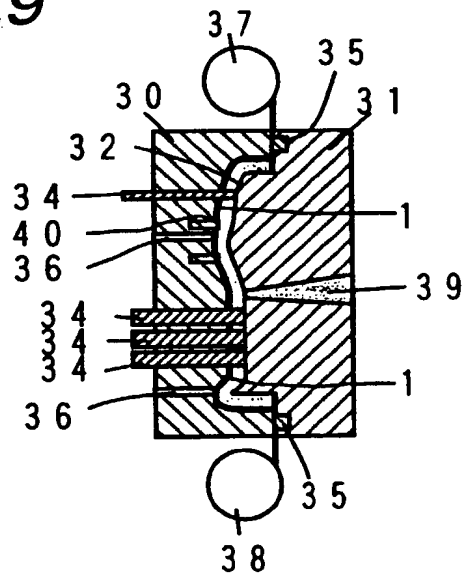
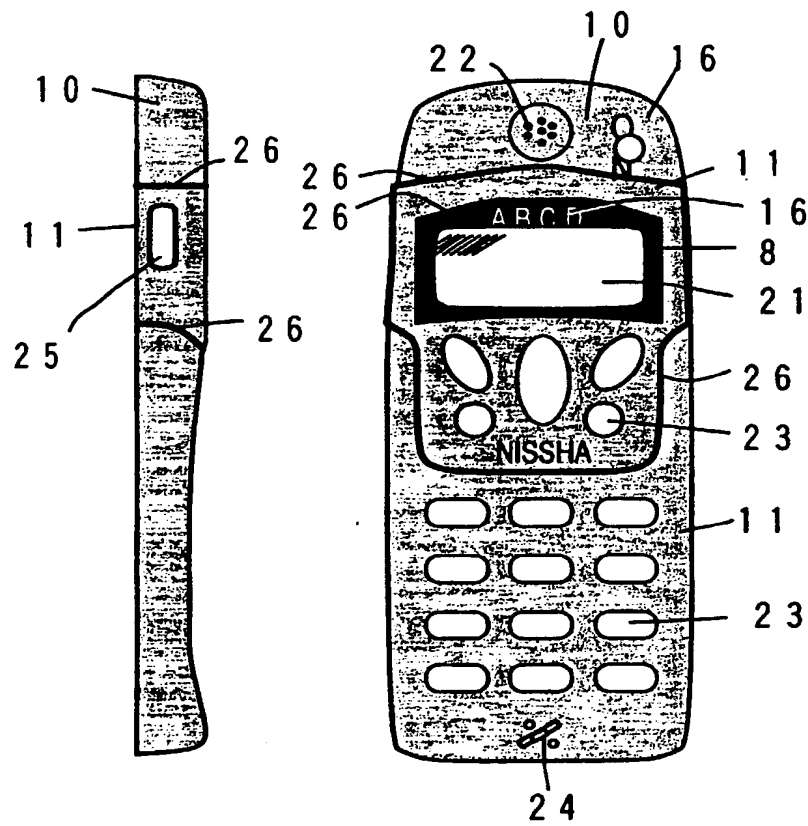




Fig. 10A

Fig. 10B



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP97/03423

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl<sup>6</sup> H04M1/02, B29C45/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Int. Cl<sup>6</sup> H04M1/02-H04M1/23, B29C45/14

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1926 - 1996	Jitsuyo Shinan Toroku
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1971 - 1997	Koho
Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1994 - 1997	1996 - 1997

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y A	JP, 57-39940, A (NISSHA Printing Co., Ltd.), March 5, 1982 (05. 03. 82) (Family: none)	1, 2, 7, 8, 10 3, 9
Y A	JP, 60-31934, A (Casio Computer Co., Ltd.), February 18, 1985 (18. 02. 85), Page 2, lower right column to page 4, upper left column (Family: none)	1, 2, 7, 8, 10 3, 9
Y A	JP, 6-43313, A (NISSHA Printing Co., Ltd.), February 18, 1994 (18. 02. 94) (Family: none)	1, 2, 7, 8, 10 3, 9
Y A	JP, 6-106572, A (NISSHA Printing Co., Ltd.), April 19, 1994 (19. 04. 94) (Family: none)	1, 2, 7, 8, 10 3, 9
Y	JP, 6-134804, A (NISSHA Printing Co., Ltd.), January 24, 1996 (24. 01. 96) (Family: none)	1-3, 7-10

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.☐ See patent family annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&amp;" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

December 3, 1997 (03. 12. 97)

Date of mailing of the international search report

December 16, 1997 (16. 12. 97)

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

Japanese Patent Office

Facsimile No.

Authorized officer

Telephone No.

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP97/03423

## C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	JP, 6-134805, A (NISSHA Printing Co., Ltd.), May 17, 1994 (17. 05. 94) (Family: none)	1, 2, 7, 8, 10 3, 9
A		
Y	JP, 8-52761, A (Dainippon Printing Co., Ltd.), February 27, 1996 (27. 02. 96) (Family: none)	1, 2, 7, 8, 10 3, 9
A		
Y	JP, 8-216177, A (Polyplastics Co., Ltd.), August 27, 1996 (27. 08. 96) & EP, 755767, A	1-3, 7-10
A		
A	JP, 5-92529, A (Asahi Chemical Industry Co., Ltd.), April 16, 1993 (16. 04. 93) (Family: none)	5
A		
A	JP, 4-50295, U (Dainippon Printing Co., Ltd.), April 28, 1992 (28. 04. 92) (Family: none)	5
A		
A	JP, 8-207494, A (Sankyo Kasei K.K.), August 13, 1996 (13. 08. 96) (Family: none)	6
A		
A	JP, 8-208854, A (Sekisui Plastics Co., Ltd.), August 13, 1996 (13. 08. 96) (Family: none)	6
A		
A	JP, 8-216344, A (Toppan Printing Co., Ltd.), August 27, 1996 (27. 08. 96) (Family: none)	6
A		
A	JP, 8-239507, A (Toppan Printing Co., Ltd.), September 17, 1996 (17. 09. 96) (Family: none)	6

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of second sheet) (July 1992)

THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)